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DRIFT WEED

CELIA THAXTER

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DRIFT-WEED

BY

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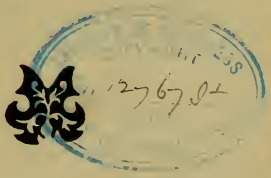

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DRIFT-WEED.

CONTRAST.

The day is bitter. Through the hollow sky
Rolls the clear sun, inexorably bright,
Glares on the shrinking earth, a lidless eye,
Shedding no warmth, but floods of blinding light.

The hurricane roars loud. The facile sea
With passionate resentment writhes and raves
Beneath its maddening whip, and furiously
Responds with all the thunder of its waves.

The iron rock, ice-locked, snow-sheathed, lies still,
The centre of this devastated world,
Beaten and lashed by wind and sea at will,
Buried in spray by the fierce breakers hurled.

Cold, raging desolation! Out of it,
Swift-footed, eager, noiseless as the light,
Glides my adventurous thought, and lo, I sit
With Memnon and the desert in my sight.

Silence and breathless heat! A torrid land,
Unbroken to the vast horizon's verge,
Save once, where from the waste of level sand
All motionless the clustered palms emerge.

Hot the wide earth and hot the blazing sky,
And still as death, unchanged since time began.
Far in the shimmering distance silently
Creeps like a snake the lessening caravan.

And on the great lips of the statue old
Broods silence, and no zephyr stirs the palm.
Nature forgets her tempests and her cold,
And breathes in peace. "There is no joy but calm."

A FADED GLOVE.

My little granddaughter, who fain would know
  Why, folded close in scented satin fine,
I keep a relic faded long ago,
  This pearl-gray, dainty, withered glove of mine,

Listen: I'll tell you. It is fifty years
  Since the fair day I laid my treasure here.
But yesterday to me the time appears;
  Ages ago to you, I know, my dear.

Upon this palm, now withered as my cheek,
  Love laid his first kiss, doubting and afraid:
Oh, swift and strong across me while I speak
  Comes memory of Love's might, my little maid!

I yet was so unconscious! 'T was a night—
  Some festal night; my sisters were above,
Not ready quite; but I, cloaked all in white,
  Waited below, and, fastening my glove,

Looked up with smiling speech to him who stood
Observing me, so still and so intent,
I wondered somewhat at his quiet mood,
Till it flashed on me what the silence meant.

What sudden fire of dawn my sky o'erspread!
What low melodious thunder broke my calm!
Could I be dreaming that this glorious head
Was bending low above my girlish palm?

His majesty of mien proclaimed him king;
His lowly gesture said, "I am your slave;"
Beneath my feet the firm earth seemed to swing,
Unstable as storm-driven wind and wave.

Ah, beautiful and terrible and sweet
The matchless moment! Was it life or death,
Or day or night? For my heart ceased to beat,
And heaven and earth changed in a single breath.

And, like a harp some hand of power doth smite
To sudden harmony, my soul awoke,
And, answering, rose to match his spirit's height,
While not a word the mystic silence broke.

'T was but an instant. Down the echoing stair
Swept voices, laughter, wafts of melody, —
My sisters three, in draperies light as air;
But like a dream the whole world seemed to me,

As, steadying my whirling thoughts, I strove
To grasp a truth so wondrous, so divine.
I shut this hand, this little tinted glove,
To keep its secret mine, and only mine.

And like an empty show the brilliant hours
Passed by, with beauty, music, pleasure thronged,
Phantasmagoria of light and flowers;
But only one delight to me belonged,

One thought, one wish, one hope, one joy, one fear,
One dizzy rapture, one star in the sky, —
The solemn sky that bent to bring God near:
I would have been content that night to die.

Only a touch upon this little glove,
And, lo, the lofty marvel which it wrought!
You wonder; for as yet you know not love,
Oh, sweet my child, my lily yet unsought!

The glove is faded, but immortal joy
Lives in the kiss; its memory cannot fade;
And when Death's clasp this pale hand shall destroy,
The sacred glove shall in my grave be laid.

PORTENT.

When the darkness drew away at the dawning
of the day,
I heard the medrakes screaming loud and shrill
across the bay;
And I wondered to behold all the sky in ruddy
gold,
Flashing into fire and flame where the clouds
like billows rolled.

Red the sea ran east and west, burning broke
each tumbling crest,
Where the waves, like shattered rubies, leaped
and fell and could not rest;
Every rock was carmine-flushed, every sail like
roses blushed,
Flying swift before the wind from the south that
roared and rushed.

"Is it judgment day?" I said, gazing out o'er
billows red,
Gazing up at crimson vapors, crowding, drifting
overhead,

Listening to the great uproar of the waters on
the shore,
To the wild sad-crying sea-birds, buffeted and
beaten sore.

"Is the end of time at hand? is this pageant,
strange and grand,
A portent of destruction blazing fierce o'er sea
and land?"
Then the scarlet ebbed, and slow, sky above and
earth below,
Drowned in melancholy purple, seemed with grief
to overflow,

And while thus I gazed, the day, growing
stronger, turned to gray;
All the transitory splendor and the beauty passed
away;
And I recognized the sign of the color poured
like wine
In this morn of late October as from clusters of
the vine.

'T was the ripeness of the year; so on, I knew,
must disappear
All the warmth and light and happiness that
made the time so dear;

And again our souls must wait while the bare
earth, desolate,
Bore in patience and in silence all the winter's
wrath and hate.

SONG.

Sing, little bird, O sing!
How sweet thy voice and clear!
How fine the airy measures ring,
The sad old world to cheer!

Bloom, little flower, O bloom!
Thou makest glad the day;
A scented torch, thou dost illume
The darkness of the way.

Dance, little child, O dance!
While sweet the small birds sing,
And flowers bloom fair, and every glance
Of sunshine tells of spring.

O! bloom, and sing, and smile,
Child, bird, and flower, and make
The sad old world forget awhile
Its sorrow for your sake!

RENUNCIATION.

Like scattered flowers blown all about the bay,
The rosy sails, lit with the sunrise, shine;
The white stars in the brightness fade away;
In perfect silence dawns the day divine.

"O bring me neither gifts of good or ill,
Delicious day! Let only peace be mine!"
And the fair hours, advancing calm and still,
Passed by her mute, nor brought her word or sign.

But when the glory of the sunset flame
Held all the world in triumph brief and sweet,
The last bright hour, with faltering footsteps, came
And laid a gift august before her feet.

Yet she entreated, "Peace! Take back your gift,
O golden hour! I am content to be

Lonely as yonder fading sails that drift
'Neath saddened skies upon the silent sea."

Fate answered her, "The gods may not recall
Their gifts, once given. Be wise, therefore. Accept
Their bounty gratefully; for not to all
Such largess falls." She bowed her head and wept.

She turned her from the sunset's red and gold,
She faced the dim East's waning violet,
She saw the twilight stealing pale and cold,
And all her soul was wrung with her regret.

Pure, powerful, triumphant music shook
The listening air and floated up the sky;
The dust and ashes of her life she took
And passed the gift of splendid beauty by.

"But oh, must storm and strife be mine," she cried,
"Forever? Shall I never find repose?
Mocked by mirage of hope and still defied
And buffeted by every wind that blows!"

From farthest distance high a clear voice rang,
"Ashes and dust shall blossom like the rose!
Climb thou above the tempests," sweet it sang,
"Patience! 'On every height there lies repose.'"

SONG.

O THE fragrance of the air
With the breathing of the flowers!
O the isles of cloudlets fair,
Shining after balmy showers!

O the freshly rippling notes!
O the warbling, loud and long,
From a thousand golden throats!
O the south wind's tender song!

O the mellow dip of oars
Through the dreamy afternoon!
O the waves that clasp the shores,
Chanting one delicious tune!

Wears the warm, enchanted day
To the last of its rich hours,
While my heart, in the sweet May,
Buds and blossoms with the flowers.

TWO SONNETS.

Nor so! You stand as long ago a king
  Stood on the sea-shore, bidding back the tide
That onward rolled resistless still, to fling
  Its awful volume landward, wild and wide.
And just as impotent is your command
  To stem the tide that rises in my soul.
It ebbs not at the lifting of your hand,
  It owns no curb, it yields to no control;
Mighty it is, and of the elements, —
  Brother of winds and lightning, cold and fire,
Subtle as light, as steadfast and intense;
  Sweet as the music of Apollo's lyre.
You think to rule the ocean's ebb and flow
With that soft woman's hand? Nay, love, not so.

And like the light-house on the rock you stand,
  And pierce the distance with your searching eyes;
Nor do you heed the waves that storm the land
  And endlessly about you fall and rise,
But seek the ships that wander night and day

Within the dim horizon's shadowy ring;
And some with flashing glance you warn away,
And some you beckon with sweet welcoming.
So steadfast still you keep your lofty place,
Safe from the tumult of the restless tide,
Firm as the rock in your resisting grace,
And strong through humble duty, not through pride.
While I — I cast my life before your feet,
And only live that I may love you, sweet!

DAYBREAK.

In the morning twilight, while the household yet
Slumbering securely day and night forget,
Lightly o'er the threshold I pass, and breathless
stand
In the dream of beauty that rests on sea and
land.

Fresh and calm and dewy, bathed in delicate air,
The happy earth awakens and grows of day
aware.
Sweetly breaks the silence some bird's delicious
trill,
And from the southern distance a breeze begins
to thrill.

All the stars have faded, and the low large moon
O'er the western water will have vanished soon.
Crystal-clear and cloudless the awful arch is
bright,
As up the conscious heaven streams the growing
light.

On the far horizon softly sleeps the haze;
O'er the ocean spaces steal the rosy rays;
Winds and waves are quiet, only far away
'Gainst the rock a breaker tosses sudden spray.

Out behind the headland glides the coaster slow,
All her canvas blushing in the ruddy glow;
Where the steadfast light-house watches day and night,
Beautiful and stately she passes out of sight.

Day that risest splendid, with promise so divine,
Mine is thy perfect gladness, thy loveliness is mine.
Thou touchest with thy blessing God's creatures great and small;
None shalt thou find more grateful than I among them all.

I turn my face in worship to the glory of the East.
I thank the lavish giver of my life's perpetual feast,
And fain would I be worthy to partake of Nature's bliss,
And share with her a moment so exquisite as this!

SONG.

O Love, Love, Love!
Whether it rain or shine,
Whether the clouds frown or the sky is clear,
Whether the thunder fill the air with fear,
Whether the winter rage or peace is here,
If only thou art near,
Then are all days divine.

O Love, Love, Love!
Where thou art not, the place
Is sad to me as death. It would be cold
In heaven without thee, if I might not hold
Thy hand in mine, if I might not behold
The beauty manifold,
The wonder of thy face.

THE NESTLING SWALLOWS.

The summer day was spoiled with fitful storm;
At night the wind died, and the soft rain dropped
With lulling murmur, and the air was warm,
And all the tumult and the trouble stopped.

We sat within the bright and quiet room,
Glowing with light and flowers and friendliness;
And faces in the radiance seemed to bloom,
Touched into beauty as by a caress.

And one struck music from the ivory keys, —
Beethoven's music; and the awful chords
Upbore us like the waves of mighty seas
That sing aloud, "All glory is the Lord's!"

And the great sound awoke beneath the eaves
The nestling swallows; and their twittering cry,
With the light touch of raindrops on the leaves,
Broke into the grand surging melody.

Across its deep, tremendous questioning,
Its solemn acquiescence, low and clear,
The rippling notes ran sweet, with airy ring,
Surprised, inquiring, but devoid of fear;

Lapsing to silence at the music's close,
A dreamy clamor, a contented stir.
"It made no discord," smiling, as he rose,
Said the great master's great interpreter.

No discord, truly! Ever Nature weaves
Her sunshine with her shadow, joy with pain;
The asking thunder through high heaven that cleaves
Is lost in the low ripple of the rain.

About the edges of the dread abyss
The innocent blossoms laugh toward the sun;
Questions of life and death, of bale or bliss,
A thousand tender touches overrun.

Why should I chronicle so slight a thing?
But such things light up life like wayside flowers,
And memory, like a bird with folded wing,
Broods with still joy o'er such delicious hours.

Dear unforgotten time! Fair summer night!
Thy nestling swallows and thy dropping rain,
The golden music and the faces bright,
Will steal with constant sweetness back again.

A joy to keep when winter darkness comes;
A living sense of beauty to recall;
A warm, bright thought, when bitter cold benumbs,
To make me glad and grateful. That is all.

VESPER SONG.

Lies the sunset splendor far and wide,
On the golden tide!
Drifting slow toward yonder evening red,
With the faint stars sparkling overhead,
Peacefully we glide.

Sweet is rest: the summer day is done,
Gone the ardent sun.
All is still: no wind of twilight blows;
Shuts the evening like a crimson rose;
Night comes like a nun.

Lift we loving voices, pure and clear,
To the Father's ear;
Fragrant as the flowers the thoughts we raise
Up to heaven, while o'er the ocean ways
Draws the darkness near.

FLOWERS IN OCTOBER.

The long black ledges are white with gulls,
As if the breakers had left their foam;
With the dying daylight the wild wind lulls,
And the scattered fishing-boats steer for home.

On the crag I sit, with the east before,
The sun behind me is low in the sky;
Warm is its touch on the rocky shore;
Sad the vast ocean spaces lie.

The cricket is hoarse in the faded grass;
The low bush rustles so thin and sere;
Swift overhead the small birds pass,
With cries that are lonely and sweet and clear.

The last chill asters their petals fold
And gone is the morning-glory's bell,
But close in a loving hand I hold
Long sprays of the scarlet pimpernel,

And thick at my feet are blossom and leaf,
Blossoms rich red as the robes of kings;
Hardly they 're touched by the autumn's grief;
Do they surmise what the winter brings?

I turn my eyes from the sweet, sad sky,
From the foam-white gulls and the sails that gleam,
To muse on the scattered flowers that lie
Lost as yet in a summer dream.

O darlings, nursed by the salt sea-spray!
O shapes of beauty so quaint and bright!
But for a little the frosts delay,
Soon will be ended your brief delight.

Could I but succor you, every one,
Spread wings of safety 'twixt harm and you;
Call from its southern travel the sun,
Banish the snow from the arching blue!

It may not be, and the frosts must fall,
The winter must reign in the summer's stead;
But, though you perish beyond recall,
Ever I love you, alive or dead.

WAIT.

ARE the roses fallen, dear my child?
Has the winter left us only thorns,
Sharp and shuddering stalks in tangles wild,
Set with cruel teeth and iron horns?

Wait a little, fret not, and at last
Beauty will the barren boughs again
Tenderly re-clothe, when snows are past,
And the earth grows glad in sun and rain.

Never vex your heart nor tear your hands
Searching 'mid the thorns for vanished bliss;
For the soul that patience understands
Needs no wisdom more divine than this:

Wait! The sweet flowers of the coming spring
Beautiful as those you mourn shall be.
Wait! for happy birds are sure to sing,
While new roses bloom for you and me.

KAREN.

At her low quaint wheel she sits to spin,
  Deftly drawing the long, light rolls
Of carded wool through her fingers thin,
  By the fireside at the Isles of Shoals.

She is not pretty, she is not young,
  Poor homesick Karen, who sits and spins,
Humming a song in her native tongue,
  That falters and stops, and again begins,

While her wheel flies fast, with its drowsy hum,
  And she makes a picture of pensive grace
As thoughts of her well-loved Norway come
  And deepen the shadows across her face.

Her collar is white as the drifted snow,
  And she spun and wove her blue gown fine
With those busy hands. See, a flitting glow
  Makes her pale cheek burn and her dark eyes
    shine!

Left you a lover in that far land,
  O Karen sad, that you pine so long?
Would I could unravel and understand
  That sorrowful, sweet Norwegian song!

When the spring wind blew, the "America wind,"
  As your people call it, that bears away
Their youths and maidens a home to find
  In this distant country, could you not stay

And live in that dear Norway still,
  And let the emigrant crowd sail West
Without you? Well, you have had your will.
  Why would you fly from your sheltering nest?

O homesick Karen, listen to me:
  You are not young, and you are not fair,
But Waldemar no one else can see,
  For he carries your image everywhere.

Is he too boyish a lover for you,
  With all his soul in his frank blue eyes?
Feign you unconsciousness? Is it true
  You know not his heart in your calm hand
    lies?

Handsome and gentle and good is he;
Loves you, Karen, better than life;
Do but consider him, can't you see
What a happy woman would be his wife?

You won't be merry? You can't be glad?
Still must you mourn for that home afar?
Well, here is an end of a hope I had,
And I am sorry for Waldemar!

A MUSSEL SHELL.

Why art thou colored like the evening sky
Sorrowing for sunset? Lovely dost thou lie,
Bared by the washing of the eager brine,
At the snow's motionless and wind-carved line.

Cold stretch the snows, cold throng the waves, the wind
Stings sharp,—an icy fire, a touch unkind,—
And sighs as if with passion of regret,
The while I mark thy tints of violet.

O beauty strange! O shape of perfect grace,
Whereon the lovely waves of color trace
The history of the years that passed thee by,
And touched thee with the pathos of the sky!

The sea shall crush thee; yea, the ponderous wave
Up the loose beach shall grind, and scoop thy grave,
Thou thought of God! What more than thou am I?
Both transient as the sad wind's passing sigh.

TRUST.

See how the wind is hauling point by point to the south,
By the boats in the little harbor, that swing to its lightest touch;
And the coasting craft emerge from the far-off river's mouth,
And on the rocks the breakers relax their impotent clutch.

At last is the tempest ended, the bitter north-east appeased,
And the world will soon be sparkling in clear white fire and dew,
And the sullen clouds melt swiftly, by the might of warm wind seized,
And the heavens shine in splendor, where broadens the matchless blue.

Carol the birds in chorus; glitters the snow-white gull,
Screaming loud in mid-air, slow-soaring high with delight;

And the rose-buds loosen their petals, the drenched flowers, sodden and dull,
Break out into stars of purple and gold and crimson and white.

Where wert thou, Spirit of Beauty, while earth lay cold and dark,
And the chill wind struck to our hearts, and the sky like an enemy scowled,
And we crept through the mists desponding, and never a glimmering spark
Shot a ray through the gloom while the storm like a demon groveled and growled?

Where art thou, Heavenly Father, when thy world seems spoiled with sin,
And darker far than thy tempest arises the smoke of doubt,
That blackens the sky of the soul?—for faith is hard to win:
To our finite sight wrong triumphs and noble things die out,

While shapes of monstrous evil make fearful thy nights and days,
And murder stalks unhindered, working its hideous will,

And innocence, gentleness, charity seem to forsake earth's ways,
And in the hearts of thy creatures are madness and nameless ill.

Behind the cloud Thou waitest, hidden, yet very near,
Infinite Spirit of Beauty, Infinite Power of Good!
At last Thou wilt scatter the vapors, and all things shall be clear,
And evil shall vanish away like a mist by the wind pursued.

MODJESKA.

DEFT hands called Chopin's music from the keys.
Silent she sat, her slender figure's poise
Flower-like and fine and full of lofty ease;
She heard her Poland's most consummate voice
From power to pathos falter, sink and change;
The music of her land, the wond'rous high,
Utmost expression of its genius strange,—
Incarnate sadness breathed in melody.
Silent and thrilled she sat, her lovely face
Flushing and paling like a delicate rose
Shaken by summer winds from its repose
Softly this way and that with tender grace,
Now touched by sun, now into shadow turned,—
While bright with kindred fire her deep eyes burned!

SONG.

O SWALLOW, sailing lightly
The crystal deeps of blue,
With flashing wings that brightly
Glitter the sunshine through,

What sayest thou, returning
From sunny lands and fair,
That summer roses burning
Shall light the fragrant air?

That merry days thou bringest,
And gone is winter's woe, —
Is this the song thou singest?
Gay prophet, is it so?

I know all beauties follow
Swift in thy shining track,
But to my heart, O swallow,
Canst thou bring summer back?

No shaft of sunshine glorious
Shall melt my winter snows,
No kiss of June victorious
Awake for me the rose!

LARS.

"Tell us a story of these isles," they said,
The daughters of the West, whose eyes had seen
For the first time the circling sea, instead
Of the blown prairie's waves of grassy green:

"Tell us of wreck and peril, storm and cold,
Wild as the wildest." Under summer stars,
With the slow moonrise at our back, I told
The story of the young Norwegian, Lars.

That youth with the black eyebrows sharply drawn
In strong curves, like some sea-bird's wings outspread
O'er his dark eyes, is Lars, and this fair dawn
Of womanhood, the maiden he will wed.

She loves him for the dangers he has past.
Her rosy beauty glowed before his stern

And vigilant regard, until at last
Her sweetness vanquished Lars the taciturn.

For he is ever quiet, strong, and wise;
Wastes nothing, not a gesture nor a breath;
Forgets not, gazing in the maiden's eyes,
A year ago it was not love, but death,

That clasped him, and can hardly learn as yet
How to be merry, haunted by that pain
And terror, and remembering with regret
The comrade he can never see again.

Out from the harbor on that winter day
Sailed the two men to set their trawl together.
Down swept the sudden snow-squall o'er the bay,
And hurled their slight boat onward like a feather.

They tossed they knew not whither, till at last
Under the light-house cliff they found a lee,
And out the road-lines of the trawl they cast
To moor her, if so happy they might be.

But quick the slender road-lines snapt in twain
In the wild breakers, and once more they tossed

Adrift; and, watching from his misty pane,
The light-house keeper muttered, "They are lost!"

Lifted the snow: night fell: swift cleared the sky;
The air grew sharp as death with polar cold:
Raged the insensate gale, and flashing high
In star-light keen the hissing billows rolled.

Driven before the wind's incessant scourge
All night they fled, — one dead ere morning lay.
Lars saw his strange, drawn countenance emerge
In the fierce sunrise light of that drear day,

And thought, "A little space and I shall be
Even as he," and, gazing in despair
O'er the wide, weltering waste, no sign could see
Of hope, or help, or comfort, anywhere.

Two hundred miles before the hurricane
The dead and living drove across the sea.
The third day dawned. His dim eyes saw again
The vast green plain, breaking eternally

In ghastly waves. But in the early light,
On the horizon glittering like a star;
Fast growing, looming tall, with canvas white,
Sailed his salvation southward from afar!

Down she bore, rushing o'er the hills of brine,
Straight for his feeble signal. As she past,
Out from the schooner's deck they flung a line,
And o'er his head the open noose was cast.

Clutching with both his hands the bowline knot
Caught at his throat, swift drawn through fire he seemed,
Whelmed in the icy sea, and he forgot
Life, death, and all things, — yet he thought he dreamed

A dread voice cried, "We 've lost him!" and a sting
Of anguish pierced his clouded senses through;
A moment more, and like a lifeless thing
He lay among the eager, pitying crew.

Long time he swooned, while o'er the ocean vast
The dead man tossed alone, they knew not where;

But youth and health triumphant were at last,
And here is Lars, you see, and here the fair

Young snow-and-rose-bloom maiden he will wed.
His face is kindly, though it seems so stern.
Death passed him by, and life begins instead,
For Thora sweet and Lars the taciturn.

SONG.

A RUSHING of wings in the dawn,
A flight of birds in the sky!
The darkness of night withdrawn,
In an outburst of melody!

O birds through the heaven that soar
With such tumult of jubilant song!
The shadows are flying before,
For the rapture of life is strong,

And my spirit leaps to the light
On the wings of its hope newborn,
And I follow your radiant flight
Through the golden halls of morn!

THORA.

Come under my cloak, my darling!
Thou little Norwegian maid!
Nor wind, nor rain, nor rolling sea
Shall chill or make thee afraid.

Come close, little blue-eyed maiden,
Nestle within my arm;
Though the lightning leaps and the thunder peals,
We shall be safe from harm.

Swift from the dim horizon
The dark sails scud for the land.
Look, how the rain-cloud drops its fringe
About us on either hand!

And high from our plunging bowsprit
Dashes the cold white spray,
And storm and tumult fill the air
And trouble the summer day.

But thou fearest nothing, darling,
Though the tempest mutter and brood,
Though the wild wind tosses thy bright brown locks,
And flutters thy grass-green snood.

I kiss thy wise white forehead,
While the thunder rolls so grand;
And I hold the curve of thy lovely cheek
In the hollow of my hand;

And I watch the sky and the ocean,
And study thy gentle face —
Its lines of sweetness and power,
The type of thy strong Norse race.

And I wonder what thy life will be,
Thou dear and charming child,
Who hast drifted so far across the world
To a home so lone and wild.

Rude and rough and sad, perhaps;
Anxious, and full of toil;
But I think no sorrow or hardship
Thine inner peace can spoil.

For better than kingly fortunes
Is the wealth that thou dost hold—
A nature perfectly balanced,
A beauty of heart untold.

Thou wilt open the door of patience,
When sorrow shall come and knock;
But to every evil, unworthy thing
Wilt thou the gates fast lock.

So shall thy days be blessed,
Whatever may be thy lot.
But what I am silently pondering
Thou understandest not,

And liftest to me thy steadfast eyes,
Calm as if Heaven looked through.
Do all the maidens in Norway
Have eyes so clear and blue?

See, darling, where, in the distance,
The cloud breaks up in the sky,
And lets a ray of sunshine fall
Where our far-off islands lie!

White they gleam, and the sea grows bright,
And silver shines the foam.
A little space, and our anchor drops
In the haven of Love and Home!

THE HAPPY BIRDS.

All about the gable tall swift the swallows flit,
Wheel and call and dart and, fluttering, chatter sweet;
All along the sloping, sunny eaves they perch and sit,
Bright as lapis-lazuli, glittering in the heat.

O spirits of the summer, so dainty, delicate,
Creatures born of sunshine and cheer and all delight,
Pray you, but delay a moment, yet a little wait,
Ere for southern lands again you spread your wings in flight!

Yet the August sun is hot, yet the days are long,
Though the grass is over-ripe and the aster blows;
Still the silence echoes to the sparrow's quiet song,
Still, though late, in thorny thickets lingers the wild rose.

Tarry yet a little, for after you have flown
Lonely all the house-tops and still the air will grow;
Where your cheerful voices rang autumn winds will moan;
Presently we shall be dull with winter's weight of snow.

O! that we could follow you and cling to Summer's hand,
Ye happy, happy birds, flying lightly through the sky!
Reach with you the rapture of some far, sunny land,
Leave to Winter's bitterness our glad and gay good-by!

SLUMBER SONG.

Thou little child, with tender, clinging arms,
Drop thy sweet head, my darling, down and rest
Upon my shoulder, rest with all thy charms;
Be soothed and comforted, be loved and blessed.

Against thy silken, honey-colored hair
I lean a loving cheek, a mute caress;
Close, close I gather thee and kiss thy fair
White eyelids, sleep so softly doth oppress.

Dear little face, that lies in calm content
Within the gracious hollow that God made
In every human shoulder, where He meant
Some tired head for comfort should be laid!

Most like a heavy-folded rose thou art,
In summer air reposing, warm and still.
Dream thy sweet dreams upon my quiet heart;
I watch thy slumber; naught shall do thee ill.

STARLIGHT.

The chill, sad evening wind of winter blows
Across the headland, bleak and bare and high,
Rustling the thin, dry grass that sparsely grows,
And shivering whispers like a human sigh.

The sky is thick with stars that sparkle keen,
And great Capella in the clear northeast
Rolls slowly up the cloudless heaven serene,
And the stern uproar of the sea has ceased

A fleeting moment, and the earth seems dead —
So still, so sad, so lonely, and so cold!
Snow-dust beneath me, and above my head
Star-dust in blackness, like thick-sprinkled gold.

The stars of fire, the tiny stars of ice,
The awful whirling worlds in space that wheel,
The dainty crystal's delicate device,—
One hand has fashioned both — and I, who kneel

Here on this winter night, 'twixt stars and snow,
As transient as a snowflake and as weak,
Yearning like all my fellow-men to know
His hidden purpose that no voice may speak;

In silent awe I watch his worlds: I see
Mighty Capella's signal, and I know
The steady beam of light that reaches me
Left the great orb full seventy years ago.

A human life-time! Reason strives in vain
To grasp at time and space, and evermore
Thought, weary grown and baffled, must again
Retrace its slow steps to the humble door

Of wistful patience, there to watch and wait
Devoutly, till at last Death's certain hand,
Imperious, opens wide the mystic gate
Between us and the future He has planned.

Yea, Death alone. But shall Death conquer all?
Love fights and pleads in anguish of despair.
Sooner shall great Capella wavering fall
Than any voice respond to his wild prayer.

And yet, what fire divine makes hope to glow
Through the pale ashes of our earthly fate?
Immortal hope, above all joy, below
All depths of pain wherein we strive and wait!

Dull is our sense; hearing we do not hear,
And seeing see not; yet we vaguely feel
Somewhere is comfort in the darkness drear,
And, hushing doubts and fears, we learn to kneel.

Starlight and silence! Dumb are sky and sea;
Silent as death the awful spaces lie;
Speechless the bitter wind blows over me,
Sad as the breathing of a human sigh.

SONG.

HARK, how sweet the thrushes sing!
  Hark, how clear the robins call!
Chorus of the happy spring,
  Summer's madrigal!

Flood the world with joy and cheer,
  O ye birds, and pour your song
Till the farthest distance hear
  Notes so glad and strong!

Storm the earth with odors sweet,
  O ye flowers, that blaze in light!
Crowd about June's shining feet,
  All ye blossoms bright.

Shout, ye waters, to the sun!
  Back are winter's fetters hurled;
Summer's glory is begun;
  Beauty holds the world!

REMONSTRANCE.

"Come out and hear the birds sing! O, wherefore sit you there
At the western window watching, dreamy-pale and still and fair,
While the warm summer wind disparts your tresses' clustering gold?
What is it on the dim sea line your eyes would fain behold?"
"I seek a sail that never looms from out the purple haze
At rosy dawn, or fading eve, or in the noontide's blaze."

"A sail? Lo, many a column of white canvas far and near!
All day they glide across the blue, appear and disappear;
See, how they crowd the offing, flocking from the sultry South!
Why stirs a smile more sad than tears the patience of your mouth?"

"They lean before the freshening breeze, they cross the ocean floor,
But the ship that brings me tidings of my love comes nevermore."

"Come out into the garden where the crimson phloxes burn,
And every slender lily-stem upbears a lustrous urn;
A thousand greetings float to you from bud and bell and star,
Their sweetness freights the breathing wind; how beautiful they are!"
"Their brilliant color blinds me; I sicken at their breath;
The whisper of this mournful wind is sad to me as death."

"And must you sit so white and cold while all the world is bright?
Ah, come with me and see how all is brimming with delight!
On the beach the emerald breaker murmurs o'er the tawny sand;
The white spray from the rock is tossed, by melting rainbows spanned."

"Nay, mock me not! I have no heart for nature's happiness;
One sound alone my soul can fill, one shape my sight can bless."

"And are your fetters forged so fast, though you were free and strong,
By the old, mysterious madness, told in story and in song
Since burdened with the human race the world began to roll?
Can you not thrust the weight away, so heavy on your soul?"
"There is no power in earth or heaven such madness to destroy,
And I would not part with sorrow that is sweeter far than joy."

"O marvelous content, that from such still despair is born!
Nay, I would wrestle with my fate till love were slain with scorn!
O, mournful Mariana! I would never sit so pale,
Watching, with eyes grown dim with dreams, the coming of a sail!"

"Peace, peace! How can you measure a depth
you never knew?
My chains to me are dearer than your freedom
is to you."

MORNING SONG.

We launch our boat upon the sparkling sea,
We dip our rhythmic oars with song and cheer;
Before our dancing prow the shadows flee,
Behind us fast the fair coasts disappear.

So fade our childhood's shores. Without regret
We leave the safe, green, happy fields, and try
The vague, uncertain ocean, storm-beset,
Nor see the tempests that before us lie.

Flushed with our hope the unknown future gleams,
Freighted with blissful dreams our barque floats on,
And life a shining path of victory seems,
Crowned with a golden peace when day is done.

BEETHOVEN.

If God speaks anywhere, in any voice,
To us, his creatures, surely here and now
We hear Him, while the great chords seem to bow
Our heads, and all the symphony's breathless noise
Breaks over us with challenge to our souls!
Beethoven's music! From the mountain peaks
The strong, divine, compelling thunder rolls,
And, "Come up higher, come!" the words it speaks,
"Out of your darkened valleys of despair,
Behold, I lift you upon mighty wings
Into Hope's living, reconciling air!
Breathe, and forget your life's perpetual stings:
Dream,—folded on the breast of Patience sweet,
Some pulse of pitying love for you may beat!"

SONG.

What good gift can I bring thee, O thou dearest!
All joys to thee belong;
Thy praise from loving lips all day thou hearest,
Sweeter than any song.
For thee the sun shines and the earth rejoices
In fragrance, music, light;
The spring-time wooes thee with a thousand voices,
For thee her flowers are bright;
Youth crowns thee, and love waits upon thy splendor,
Trembling beneath thine eyes;
The morning sky is yet serene and tender,
Thy life before thee lies.
What shall I bring thee, O thou dearest, fairest!
Thou holdest in thy hand
My heart as lightly as the rose thou wearest;
Nor wilt thou understand
Thou art my sun, my rose, my day, my morrow,
My lady proud and sweet!
I bring the treasure of a priceless sorrow,
To lay before thy feet.

WITH THE TIDE.

Swift o'er the water my light yacht dances,
Flying fast from the wind of the South;
Bright from her bowsprit the white foam glances,
And straight we steer for the harbor's mouth.

The coast line dim from the haze emerges,
With tender tints of the spring-time toned;
On silver beaches roll sparkling surges,
And woods are green on the hills enthroned.

The sentinel light-houses watch together,
As the stately river we reach at last;
The robins sing in the blithe May weather,
And the flood-tide bears us onward fast.

From bank to bank flows a chorus mellow
Of rippling frogs and of singing birds;
The fields are starry with flowers of yellow,
And green slopes pasture the lowing herds.

A lovely perfume blows softly over
From apple-blossoms on either side,
From golden willow and budding clover,
And many a garden of lowly pride.

And a lazy echo of glad cocks crowing
From door-yards cozy rings far and near!
And the city's murmur is slowly growing
From out the distance distinct and clear.

Over the river, so broadly flowing,
Cottages look from the sheltering trees;
And out through the orchard, with blossoms snowing,
Comes a brown-haired maiden from one of these.

She waves her hand as in friendly token,
And watches my swift boat sailing on;
I answer her signal — no word is spoken,
'T is but a moment, and she is gone.

And when, from the far-off town returning,
Dropping down with the ebbing tide,
Seaward we sail, with the sunset burning
O'er wastes of the ocean, lone and wide,

Again in the orchard her white hand lifted
Shows like a waft of a sea-bird's wing,
While the rosy blossoms are o'er her drifted,
And loud with rapture the robins sing.

I know her not and shall know her never,
But ever I watch for that friendly sign;
And up or down with the stately river
Her lovely greeting is always mine.

And her presence lends to the scene a glory,
More beauty to blossom and stream and tree;
And back o'er the wastes of the ocean hoary
Her gentle image I take with me.

"THE SUNRISE NEVER FAILED US YET."

Upon the sadness of the sea
The sunset broods regretfully;
From the far lonely spaces, slow
Withdraws the wistful afterglow.

So out of life the splendor dies;
So darken all the happy skies;
So gathers twilight, cold and stern;
But overhead the planets burn;

And up the east another day
Shall chase the bitter dark away;
What though our eyes with tears be wet?
The sunrise never failed us yet.

The blush of dawn may yet restore
Our light and hope and joy once more.
Sad soul, take comfort, nor forget
That sunrise never failed us yet!

ENTHRALLED.

Like huge waves, petrified, against the sky,
The solemn hills are heaved; by shadow kissed,
Or softly touched by delicate light they lie
Melting in sapphire and in amethyst.

The thronging mountains, crowding all the scene,
Are like the long swell of an angry sea,
Tremendous surging tumult that has been
Smitten to awful silence suddenly.

The nearer slopes with autumn glory blaze,
Garnet and ruby, topaz, amber, gold;
Up through the quiet air the thin smoke strays
From many a lonely homestead, brown and old.

The scattered cattle graze in pastures bare,
The brooks sing unconcerned beside the way,
Belated crickets chirp, while still and fair
Dies into sunset peace the golden day.

And toward the valley, where the little town
Beckons with twinkling lights, that gleam below
Like bright and friendly eyes, we loiter down
And find our shelter and our fireside glow.

But while the gay hours pass with laugh and jest,
And all is radiant warmth and joy once more,
My captured thought must wander out in quest
Of that vast mountain picture, o'er and o'er;

Where underneath the black and star-sown arch
Earth's ancient trouble speaks eternally;
And I must watch those mighty outlines march
In silence, motionless, with none to see;

While from the north the night-wind sighing sweeps,
And, sharp against the crystal sky relieved,
The tumult of forgotten ages sleeps
Where like huge waves the solemn hills are heaved.

SONG.

Rolls the long breaker in splendor, and glances
Leaping in light!
Sparkling and singing the swift ripple dances,
Laughing and bright;
Up through the heaven the curlew is flying,
Soaring so high!
Sweetly his wild notes are ringing, and dying,
Lost in the sky.
Glitter the sails to the south-wind careening,
White-winged and brave;
Bowing to breeze and to billow, and leaning
Low o'er the wave.
Beautiful wind, with the touch of a lover
Leading the hours,
Helping the winter-worn world to recover
All its lost flowers,
Gladly I hear thy warm whisper of rapture,
Sorrow is o'er!
Earth all her music and bloom shall recapture,
Happy once more.

1876.

TRANSITION.

A CLASH of human tongues within
  Made the bright room a dreary jail;
Dull webs of talk the idle spin
  Turned all its glow and color pale.

Outside, the peaceful sunset sky
  Was burning, deepening with the night;
One great star, glittering still and high,
  Sent o'er the sea its track of light.

And wearily I spoke, and heard
  An empty echo of reply,
Fretting like some imprisoned bird
  That longs to break its cage and fly;

When suddenly the din seemed stilled,
  Rarer the air so dense before;
A mystic rapture warmed and thrilled
  My heart, and I was dull no more.

Joy stole to me with sweet surmise,
With sense of some unmeasured good;
There was no need to lift my eyes
To know who on the threshold stood,

More splendid than the brilliant night
That looked in at the window-pane,
Welcome as to parched fields the light,
Refreshing touch of summer rain!

She moved with recognition sweet,
She bowed with courtesy calm and kind,
As graceful as the waving wheat
That bends before the summer wind.

Swift sped the step of lagging time,
As if a breeze of morning blew;
Clear as the ring of Chaucer's rhyme
The vapid, idle talking grew!

I heard her rich tones sounding through
The many voices like a strain
Of lofty music, strong and true,
And perfect joy was mine again.

I did not seek her radiant face,
Bright as spring light when winter dies,
But warm across the crowded space
I felt the gaze of noble eyes;

And in that glorious look, at last,
I seemed like one with sins forgiven,
With all life's pain and sorrow passed,
Entering the open gates of heaven!

LEVIATHAN.

Betwixt the bleak rock and the barren shore
Rolled miles of hoary waves that hissed with frost,
And from the bitter north with sullen roar
Swept the wild wind, and the wild water tossed.

In the cold sky, hard, pitiless, and drear,
The sun dropped down; but ere the world grew gray,
A sweet, reluctant rose-tint, sad and clear,
Stained icy crags and leagues of leaping spray.

Midway between the lone rock and the shore
A fountain fair sprang skyward suddenly,
And sudden fell, and yet again once more
The column rose, and sank into the sea.

Silent, ethereal, mystic, delicate,
Flushed with delicious glow of fading rose,

It grew and vanished, like some genie great,
Some wild, thin phantom, woven of winter snows.

'T was the foam-fountain of the mighty whale,
Rising each time more far and faint and dim.
All his huge strength against the thundering gale
He set; no hurricane could hinder him!

There came to me a gladness in the sight,
A pleasure in the thought of life so strong,
Daring the elements, and making light
Of winter's wrathful power of wreck and wrong.

I gloried in his triumph o'er the vast
Blind rage of Nature. All her awful force,
The terror of her tempest full she cast
Against him, yet he kept his ponderous course.

For her worst fury he nor stayed nor turned.
'T was joy to think in such tremendous play,
Through the sea's cruelty, all unconcerned,
Leviathan pursued his placid way!

TO A VIOLIN.

What wondrous power from heaven upon thee wrought?
What prisoned Ariel within thee broods?
Marvel of human skill and human thought,
Light as a dry leaf in the winter woods!

Thou mystic thing, all beautiful! What mind
Conceived thee, what intelligence began
And out of chaos thy rare shape designed,
Thou delicate and perfect work of man?

Across my hands thou liest mute and still;
Thou wilt not breathe to me thy secret fine;
Thy matchless tones the eager air shall thrill
To no entreaty or command of mine;

But comes thy master, lo! thou yieldest all:
Passion and pathos, rapture and despair;
To the soul's need thy searching voice doth call
In language exquisite beyond compare,

Till into speech articulate at last
Thou seem'st to break, and thy charmed listener hears
Thee waking echoes of the vanished past,
Touching the source of gladness and of tears;

And with bowed head he lets the sweet wave roll
Across him, swayed by that weird power of thine,
And reverence and wonder filled his soul
That man's creation should be so divine.

PHILOSOPHY.

So soon the end must come,
  Why waste in sighs our breath?
So soon our lips are dumb,
  So swift comes death.

So brief the time to smile,
  Why darken we the air
With frowns and tears, the while
  We nurse despair?

Hold firm the suffering will
  And bravely thrust it back;
Fight with the powers of ill,
  The legions black.

Stand in the sunshine sweet
  And treasure every ray,
Nor seek with stubborn feet
  The darksome way.

Have courage! Keep good cheer!
Our longest time is brief.
To those who hold you dear
Bring no more grief.

But cherish blisses small,
Grateful for least delight
That to your lot doth fall,
However slight.

And lo! all hearts will bring
Love, to make glad your days;
Blessings untold will spring
About your ways.

So shall life bloom and shine,
Lifted its pain above,
Crowned with this gift divine,
The gift of Love.

MEDRAKE AND OSPREY.

Medrake, waving wide wings low over the breeze-rippled bight;
Osprey, soaring superb overhead in the fathomless blue,
Graceful and fearless and strong, do you thrill with the morning's delight
Even as I? Brings the sunshine a message of beauty for you?

O the blithe breeze of the west, blowing sweet from the far-away land,
Bowing the grass heavy-headed, thick crowding, so slender and proud!
O the warm sea sparkling over with waves by the swift wind fanned!
O the wide sky crystal clear, with bright islands of delicate cloud!

Feel you the waking of life in the world locked long time in the frost,
Beautiful birds, with the light flashing bright from your banner-like wings?

Osprey, soaring on high, in the depths of the sky half lost,
Medrake, hovering low where the sandpiper's sweet note rings!

Nothing am I to you, a blot, perhaps, on the day;
Naught do I add to your joy, but precious you are in my sight;
And you seem on your glad wings to lift me up into the ether away,
And the morning divine is more radiant because of your glorious flight.

ALONE.

The lilies clustered fair and tall:
I stood outside the garden wall:
I saw her light robe glimmering through
The fragrant evening's dusk and dew.

She stooped above the lilies pale;
Up the clear east the moon did sail;
I saw her bend her lovely head
O'er her rich roses blushing red.

Her slender hand the flowers caressed,
Her touch the unconscious blossoms blessed;
The rose against her perfumed palm
Leaned its soft cheek in blissful calm.

I would have given my soul to be
That rose she touched so tenderly!
I stood alone, outside the gate,
And knew that life was desolate.

REVERIE.

The white reflection of the sloop's great sail
Sleeps trembling on the tide,
In scarlet trim her crew lean o'er the rail,
Lounging on either side.

Pale blue and streaked with pearl the waters lie,
And glitter in the heat;
The distance gathers purple bloom where sky
And glimmering coast-line meet.

From the cove's curving rim of sandy gray
The ebbing tide has drained,
Where, mournful, in the dusk of yesterday
The curlew's voice complained.

Half lost in hot mirage the sails afar
Lie dreaming, still and white;
No wave breaks, no wind breathes, the peace to mar,
Summer is at its height.

How many thousand summers thus have shone
Across the ocean waste,
Passing in swift succession, one by one
By the fierce winter chased!

The gray rocks blushing soft at dawn and eve,
The green leaves at their feet,
The dreaming sails, the crying birds that grieve,
Ever themselves repeat.

And yet how dear and how forever fair
Is Nature's friendly face,
And how forever new and sweet and rare
Each old familiar grace!

What matters it that she will sing and smile
When we are dead and still?
Let us be happy in her beauty while
Our hearts have power to thrill.

Let us rejoice in every moment bright,
Grateful that it is ours;
Bask in her smiles with ever fresh delight,
And gather all her flowers;

For presently we part: what will avail
  Her rosy fires of dawn,
Her noontide pomps, to us, who fade and fail,
  Our hands from hers withdrawn?

HEART'S-EASE.

Southward still the sun is slanting day by day,
Skies that brim with gold and azure slowly change ;
Beauty waxes cold and dim and cannot stay,
Into tone and tint steals something ill and strange.

Threat of evil finds its way to every ear,
Lurks in light and shade and sounds in every breath ;
From the pathless snow-fields comes a warning drear,
And the shuddering north-wind carries news of death.

Stealthy step of Winter near and nearer draws :
Locking earth beneath him, terrible with might,
Strides he from the icy zone without a pause,
Swift and sure and fierce, with ready hand to smite.

Dearest, when without the door he threatening stands,
Having rendered desolate the fair green earth,
And sent her happy birds to sunnier lands,
And choked with sullen snows her summer mirth,

We shall sit together, you and I, once more,
Warm and quiet, shut away from storm and cold;
We shall smile to hear him blustering at the door,
While the room glows with the firelight's ruddy gold.

How safe my heart keeps every memory sweet,
Holding still your picture, as you used to sit,
Ever lovely, full of grace from head to feet,
With that heap of snowy wool I watched you knit;

With the lamplight falling on your cloudy hair—
On the rich, loose bands of brown, so soft to touch;
On the silken knot of rose you used to wear,
On the thoughtful little face I love so much.

You remember, when aloud I read to you,
Sometimes silence intervened. You would not move,
But in your radiant cheek the blushes grew,
For you knew I paused to gaze at you, my love!

Paused to realize my heaven, till with kind,
Clear and questioning gray eyes you sought my face,
What a look! Its kindling glory struck me blind;
'T was a splendor that illumined all the place.

What to us are Winter's blows and hate and wrath?
And what matter that the green earth's bloom is fled?
There has been immortal summer in our path
All the happy, happy years since we were wed.

AUTUMN.

Round and round the garden rushed a sudden blast,
Crying, "Autumn! Autumn!" shuddering as it passed.
Dry poppy-head and larkspur-spike shrill whistled in the wind,
Together whispering, "Autumn! and Winter is behind!"

Tossed the sumach pennons, green and gold and red;
Flapped the awning scallops loudly overhead;
Swung the empty hammocks lightly to and fro;
While the crickets simmered, chirruping below.

Keen the star of evening hung glittering in the sky,
Red the west was burning, deepening silently;
Summer constellations slow wheeling out of sight,
Great Orion shining clear upon the face of night.

Sadly sang the ocean, sighing in the dark,
Far away the light-house lit a sudden spark.
Black against the sunset sails were gliding past;
Earth and sea and sky were saying, "Autumn's here at last!"

Soon will snow be flying, soon will tempests roar,
Soon the freezing north will lash us bitter as before;
I heard the waters whisper, I heard the winds complain,
But sweet, reluctant Summer I knew would come again.

SONG.

Love, art thou weary with the sultry day?
Fain would I be the cool and delicate air
About the whiteness of thy brow to play,
And softly, lightly stir thy cloudy hair.

Upon thy head doth the fierce winter smite,
And shudderest thou in darkness cold to be?
I would I were the coming of the light,
Shelter, and radiant warmth to comfort thee.

I would be fire and fragrance, light and air,
All gracious things that serve thee at thy need;
Music, to lift thy heart above all care —
The wise and charming book that thou dost read.

There is no power that cheers and blesses thee
But I do envy it, beneath the sun!
Thy health, thy rest, thy refuge I would be;
Thy heaven on earth, thine every good in one.

SUBMISSION.

THE sparrow sits and sings, and sings ;
Softly the sunset's lingering light
Lies rosy over rock and turf,
And reddens where the restless surf
Tosses on high its plumes of white.

Gently and clear the sparrow sings,
While twilight steals across the sea,
And still and bright the evening-star
Twinkles above the golden bar
That in the west lies quietly.

Oh, steadfastly the sparrow sings,
And sweet the sound ; and sweet the touch
Of wooing winds ; and sweet the sight
Of happy Nature's deep delight
In her fair spring, desired so much !

But while so clear the sparrow sings
A cry of death is in my ear ;

The crashing of the riven wreck,
Breakers that sweep the shuddering deck,
And sounds of agony and fear.

How is it that the birds can sing?
Life is so full of bitter pain;
Hearts are so wrung with hopeless grief;
Woe is so long and joy so brief;
Nor shall the lost return again.

Though rapturously the sparrow sings,
No bliss of Nature can restore
The friends whose hands I clasped so warm,
Sweet souls that through the night and storm
Fled from the earth for evermore.

Yet still the sparrow sits and sings,
Till longing, mourning, sorrowing love,
Groping to find what hope may be
Within death's awful mystery,
Reaches its empty arms above;

And listening, while the sparrow sings,
And soft the evening shadows fall,
Sees, through the crowding tears that blind,
A little light, and seems to find
And clasp God's hand, who wrought it all.

SONG.

I WORE your roses yesterday:
  About this light robe's folds of white,
Wherein their gathered sweetness lay,
  Still clings their perfume of delight.

And all in vain the warm wind sweeps
  These airy folds like vapor fine,
Among them still the odor sleeps,
  And haunts me with a dream divine.

So to my heart your memory clings,
  So sweet, so rich, so delicate:
Eternal summer-time it brings,
  Defying all the storms of fate;

A power to turn the darkness bright,
  Till life with matchless beauty glows;
Each moment touched with tender light,
  And every thought of you a rose!

SPRING AGAIN.

I stood on the height in the stillness
And the planet's outline scanned,
And half was drawn with the line of sea
And half with the far blue land.

With wings that caught the sunshine
In the crystal deeps of the sky,
Like shapes of dreams, the gleaming gulls
Went slowly floating by.

Below me the boats in the harbor
Lay still, with their white sails furled;
Sighing away into silence,
The breeze died off the world.

On the weather-worn, ancient ledges
Peaceful the calm light slept;
And the chilly shadows, lengthening,
Slow to the eastward crept.

The snow still lay in the hollows,
And where the salt waves met
The iron rock, all ghastly white
The thick ice glimmered yet.

But the smile of the sun was kinder,
The touch of the air was sweet;
The pulse of the cruel ocean seemed
Like a human heart to beat.

Frost-locked, storm-beaten, and lonely,
In the midst of the wintry main,
Our bleak rock yet the tidings heard:
"There shall be spring again!"

Worth all the waiting and watching,
The woe that the winter wrought,
Was the passion of gratitude that shook
My soul at the blissful thought!

Soft rain and flowers and sunshine,
Sweet winds and brooding skies,
Quick-flitting birds to fill the air
With clear, delicious cries;

And the warm sea's mellow murmur
  Resounding day and night;
A thousand shapes and tints and tones
  Of manifold delight,

Nearer and ever nearer
  Drawing with every day!
But a little longer to wait and watch
  'Neath skies so cold and gray;

And hushed is the roar of the bitter north
  Before the might of the Spring,
And up the frozen slope of the world
  Climbs Summer, triumphing.

SONNET.

As happy dwellers by the sea-side hear
  In every pause the sea's mysterious sound,
  The infinite murmur, solemn and profound,
Incessant, filling all the atmosphere,
Even so I hear you, for you do surround
  My newly-waking life, and break for aye
About the viewless shores, till they resound
  With echoes of God's greatness night and day.
Refreshed and glad I feel the full flood-tide
  Fill every inlet of my waiting soul,
  Long-striving, eager hope, beyond control,
For help and strength at last is satisfied.
And you exalt me, like the sounding sea,
With ceaseless whispers of eternity.

SONG.

Above in her chamber her voice I hear
Singing so clear;
Among her flowers I stand and wait,
Dreaming I lean on the garden gate,
In joy and fear.

Softly the light robes she doth wear
Sweep down the stair;
O eager heart, less wildly beat, —
I shall behold her, stately, sweet,
All good and fair!

Nearer, her voice! In a moment more
Through the open door
Come grace and beauty and all delight
The round world holds to my dazzled sight,
The threshold o'er!

She holds me mute with her beaming eyes
Full of bright surprise;
Still grow the pulses her coming shook,
In the gentle might of her golden look
My heaven lies!

FOREBODING.

Cricket, why wilt thou crush me with thy cry?
How can such light sound weigh so heavily!
Behold the grass is sere, the cold dews fall,
The world grows empty — yes, I know it all,
The knell of joy I hear.

O long ago the swallows hence have flown,
And sadly sings the sea in undertone;
The wild vine crimsons o'er the rough gray stone;
The stars of winter rise, the cool winds moan;
Fast wanes the golden year.

O cricket, cease thy sorrowful refrain!
This summer's glory comes not back again,
But others wait with flowers and sun and rain;
Why wakest thou this haunting sense of pain,
Of loss, regret, and fear?

Clear sounds thy note above the waves' low sigh,
Clear through the breathing wind that wanders by,
Clear through the rustle of dry grasses tall;
Thou chantest, "Joy is dead!" I know it all,
The winter's woe is near.

HOMAGE.

Nay, comrade, 't is a weary path we tread
Through this world's desert spaces, dull and dry,
And long ago died out youth's morning-red,
And low the sunset fires before us lie:

And you are worn, though brave the face you wear.
Forbear the deprecating gesture, take
The honest admiration that I bear
Your genius, and be mute, for friendship's sake.

Up to your lips I lift a generous wine,
Pure, perfumed, potent, living, sparkling bright,
A deep cup, brimming with a draught divine;
Drink, then, and be refreshed with my delight.

It gladdens you? You know the gift sincere?
You dreamed not life yet held a thing so sweet?

Nay, noble friend, your thanks I will not hear,
But I shall cast my roses at your feet,

And go my way rejoicing that 't is I
Who recognize, acknowledge, judge you best,
Proud that a star so steadfast lights the sky,
And in the power of blessing you most blest.

DISCONTENT.

THERE is no day so dark
But through the murk some ray of hope may steal,
Some blessed touch from Heaven that we might feel,
If we but chose to mark.

We shut the portals fast,
And turn the key and let no sunshine in;
Yet to the worst despair that comes through sin
God's light shall reach at last.

We slight our daily joy,
Make much of our vexations, thickly set
Our path with thorns of discontent, and fret
At our fine gold's alloy,

Till bounteous Heaven might frown
At such ingratitude, and, turning, lay
On our impatience burdens that would weigh
Our aching shoulders down.

We shed too many tears,
And sigh too sore, and yield us up to woe,
As if God had not planned the way we go
And counted out our years.

Can we not be content,
And lift our foreheads from the ignoble dust
Of these complaining lives, and wait with trust,
Fulfilling Heaven's intent?

Must we have wealth and power,
Fame, beauty, all things ordered to our mind?
Nay, all these things leave happiness behind!
Accept the sun and shower,

The humble joys that bless,
Appealing to indifferent hearts and cold
With delicate touch, striving to reach and hold
Our hidden consciousness;

And see how everywhere
Love comforts, strengthens, helps, and saves us all;
What opportunities of good befall
To make life sweet and fair!

ALREADY.

ALREADY the dandelions
  Are changed into vanishing ghosts;
Already the tall ripe grasses
  Are standing in serried hosts,

Bowing with stately gesture
  Whenever the warm winds blow,
Like the spear-heads of an army
  Charging against the foe.

Already the nestling sparrows
  Are clothed in a mist of gray,
And under the breast of the swallow
  The warm eggs stir to-day.

Already the cricket is busy
  With hints of soberer days,
And the golden-rod lights slowly
  Its torch for the autumn blaze.

O brief, bright smile of summer!
O days divine and dear!
The voices of winter's sorrow
Already we can hear.

And we know that the frosts will find us,
And the smiling skies grow rude,
While we look in the face of Beauty,
And worship her every mood.

GUESTS.

Sunflower tall and hollyhock, that wave in the wind together,
Corn-flower, poppy, and marigold, blossoming fair and fine,
Delicate sweet-peas, glowing bright in the quiet autumn weather,
While over the fence, on fire with bloom, climbs the nasturtium vine!

Quaint little wilderness of flowers, straggling hither and thither —
Morning-glories tangled about the larkspur gone to seed,
Scarlet runners that burst all bounds, and wander, heaven knows whither,
And lilac spikes of bergamot, as thick as any weed.

And oh, the bees and the butterflies, the humming-birds and sparrows,
That over the garden waver and chirp and flutter the livelong day!
Humming-birds, that dart in the sun like green and golden arrows,
Butterflies like loosened flowers blown off by the wind in play.

Look at the red nasturtium flower, drooping, bending, and swaying;
Out the gold-banded humble-bee breaks and goes booming anew!
Hark, what the sweet-voiced fledgling sparrows low to themselves are saying,
Pecking my golden oats where the corn-flowers gleam so blue!

Welcome, a thousand times welcome, ye dear and delicate neighbors —
Bird and bee and butterfly, and humming-bird fairy fine!
Proud am I to offer you a field for your graceful labors;
All the honey and all the seeds are yours in this garden of mine.

I sit on the door-step and watch you. Beyond
lies the infinite ocean,
Sparkling, shimmering, whispering, rocking itself
to rest;
And the world is full of perfume and color and
beautiful motion,
And each new hour of this sweet day the
happiest seems and best.

MUTATION.

About your window's happy height
The roses wove their airy screen:
More radiant than the blossoms bright
Looked your fair face between.

The glowing summer sunshine laid
Its touch on field and flower and tree;
But 't was your golden smile that made
The warmth that gladdened me.

The summer withered from the land,
The vision from the window passed:
Blank Sorrow looked at me; her hand
Sought mine and clasped it fast.

The bitter wind blows keen and drear,
Stinging with winter's flouts and scorns,
And where the roses breathed I hear
The rattling of the thorns.

FAREWELL.

THE crimson sunset faded into gray;
Upon the murmurous sea the twilight fell;
The last warm breath of the delicious day
Passed with a mute farewell.

Above my head, in the soft purple sky,
A wild note sounded like a shrill-voiced bell;
Three gulls met, wheeled, and parted with a cry
That seemed to say, "Farewell!"

I watched them: one sailed east, and one soared west,
And one went floating south; while like a knell
That mournful cry the empty sky possessed,
"Farewell, farewell, farewell!"

"Farewell!" I thought, it is the earth's one speech;
All human voices the sad chorus swell;
Though mighty Love to heaven's high gate may reach,
Yet must he say, "Farewell!"

The rolling world is girdled with the sound,
Perpetually breathed from all who dwell
Upon its bosom, for no place is found
Where is not heard, "Farewell!"

"Farewell, farewell!" — from wave to wave 't is tossed,
From wind to wind: earth has one tale to tell;
All other sounds are dulled and drowned and lost
In this one cry, "Farewell!"

DOUBT.

THE wild rose blooms for the sun of June,
The tide ebbs slowly out;
I hear in the dreamy afternoon
The far-off fisher's shout.

The sand lies gray and the sea leaps blue,
The tide ebbs slowly out;
O lover mine, who called to you,
That you left me here to doubt?

The white gull's wing sweeps the whiter foam,
The tide ebbs slowly out;
'T is not your white sail, yearning home
To put my fears to rout!

The rose may blush and the sun may shine,
The tide ebbs slowly out;
The world is good if you are mine,
Ashes and dust without!

SUNSET SONG.

Far off against the solemn sky
  Black lie the city's towers;
Before me rustles, dim and dry,
  My field of golden flowers.

How thin the wind's cool whisper draws
  Through withered leaf and stalk!
Is this the breeze that once would pause
  With blossoms bright to talk?

Dark lies the land in twilight sad,
  No bird sings in its bowers;
Where is the glory once that clad
  My field of golden flowers?

The distant city rings its bells,
  Like memory's tender chime;
O sweet, sweet bells, ye speak farewells
  To life's enchanted prime!

Dark lies the land in twilight cold,
Gone are the sumptuous hours ;
The city sleeps, and shadows fold
My field of golden flowers.

"LOVE SHALL SAVE US ALL."

O Pilgrim, comes the night so fast?
  Let not the dark thy heart appall,
Though loom the shadows vague and vast,
  For Love shall save us all.

There is no hope but this to see
  Through tears that gather fast and fall;
Too great to perish Love must be,
  And Love shall save us all.

Have patience with our loss and pain,
  Our troubled space of days so small;
We shall not reach our arms in vain,
  For Love shall save us all.

O Pilgrim, but a moment wait,
  And we shall hear our darlings call
Beyond death's mute and awful gate,
  And Love shall save us all!

POEMS FOR CHILDREN.

LITTLE GUSTAVA.

Little Gustava sits in the sun,
Safe in the porch, and the little drops run
From the icicles under the eaves so fast,
For the bright spring sun shines warm at last,
And glad is little Gustava.

She wears a quaint little scarlet cap,
And a little green bowl she holds in her lap,
Filled with bread and milk to the brim,
And a wreath of marigolds round the rim:
"Ha, ha!" laughs little Gustava.

Up comes her little gray, coaxing cat,
With her little pink nose, and she mews,
"What's that?"
Gustava feeds her, — she begs for more;
And a little brown hen walks in at the door:
"Good-day!" cries little Gustava.

She scatters crumbs for the little brown hen.
There comes a rush and a flutter, and then

Down fly her little white doves so sweet,
With their snowy wings and their crimson feet:
"Welcome!" cries little Gustava.

So dainty and eager they pick up the crumbs.
But who is this through the door-way comes?
Little Scotch terrier, little dog Rags,
Looks in her face, and his funny tail wags:
"Ha, ha!" laughs little Gustava.

"You want some breakfast, too?" and down
She sets her bowl on the brick floor brown;
And little dog Rags drinks up her milk,
While she strokes his shaggy locks, like silk:
"Dear Rags!" says little Gustava.

Waiting without stood sparrow and crow,
Cooling their feet in the melting snow:
"Won't you come in, good folk?" she cried.
But they were too bashful, and stayed outside,
Though "Pray come in!" cried Gustava.

So the last she threw them, and knelt on the mat
With doves and biddy and dog and cat.
And her mother came to the open house-door:
"Dear little daughter, I bring you some more,
My merry little Gustava!"

Kitty and terrier, biddy and doves,
All things harmless Gustava loves.
The shy, kind creatures 't is joy to feed,
And oh, her breakfast is sweet indeed
To happy little Gustava!

THE DOUBLE SUNFLOWER.

The sunflowers hung their banners out in the
sweet September weather;
A stately company they stood by the garden
fence together,
And looked out on the shining sea that bright
and brighter grew,
And slowly bowed their golden heads to every
wind that blew.

But the double sunflower bloomed apart, far
prouder than the rest,
And by his crown's majestic weight he seemed
almost oppressed.
He held himself aloof upon his tall and slender
stem,
And gloried in the splendor of his double
diadem.

All clothed in bells of lovely blue, a morning-
glory vine
Could find no friendly stick or stalk about which
she might twine;

And prone upon the ground near by, with blossoms red as fire,
A scarlet runner lay for lack of means to clamber higher.

They both perceived the sunflower tall who proudly stood aside;
Nothing to them was his grand air of majesty and pride;
With one accord they charged at him, and up his stalk they ran,
And straight to hang their red and blue all over him began.

Oh, then he was magnificent, all azure, gold, and flame!
But, woe is me! an autumn breeze from out the northwest came;
With all their leaves and flowers the vines about him closely wound,
And with that keen wind's help at once they dragged him to the ground.

I found him there next morning, his pomp completely wrecked,
His prostrate form all gorgeously with tattered blooms bedecked.

"Alas!" I said, "no power on earth your glory
can recall!
Did you not know, dear sunflower, that pride
must have a fall?"

I raised him up and bore him in, and, ere he
faded quite,
In the corner he stood splendid a while for our
delight;
But his humbler, single brethren, in the garden,
every one,
With shining disks and golden rays stayed gazing
at the sun.

THE SHAG.

"WHAT is that great bird, sister, tell me,
Perched high on the top of the crag?"
"'T is the cormorant, dear little brother;
The fishermen call it the shag."

"But what does it there, sister, tell me,
Sitting lonely against the black sky?"
"It has settled to rest, little brother;
It hears the wild gale wailing high."

"But I am afraid of it, sister,
For over the sea and the land
It gazes, so black and so silent!"
"Little brother, hold fast to my hand."

"Oh what was that, sister? The thunder?
Did the shag bring the storm and the cloud,
The wind and the rain and the lightning?"
"Little brother, the thunder roars loud.

"Run fast, for the rain sweeps the ocean;
Look! over the light-house it streams;
And the lightning leaps red, and above us
The gulls fill the air with their screams."

O'er the beach, o'er the rocks, running swiftly,
The little white cottage they gain;
And safely they watch from the window
The dance and the rush of the rain.

But the shag kept his place on the headland,
And when the brief storm had gone by,
He shook his loose plumes, and they saw him
Rise splendid and strong in the sky.

Clinging fast to the gown of his sister,
The little boy laughed as he flew:
"He is gone with the wind and the lightning!
And — I am not frightened, — are you?"

PERSEVERANCE.

Out I went in the morning, to look at my garden gay :
Everything shone with the dew-drops that sparkling and trembling lay
Scattered to left and to right, and the webs of the spiders were hung
Thickly with pearls and diamonds; light in the wind they swung.

Down in a corner, my sunflower, tall as a lilac-tree,
Shook out his tattered golden flags, and bowed and nodded to me.
Rather heavy-headed was he; for that I did not care,
For he blazed all over with flowers, though rather the worse for wear.

And under the sunflower, on the fence, a little brown bird sat,
Trying to sing; you never heard such a queer little song as that!

A soft brown baby sparrow, without any tail at all,
Trying his voice as he sat alone beneath the sunflower tall.

He could n't sing in the least, you know; he quavered and quavered again,
Seeking so hard to recollect his father's beautiful strain!
But his young voice was hoarse and weak; he could not find the tune
He used to hear above the nest in the happy days of June.

But not at all was he daunted; he warbled it o'er and o'er,
And every time I thought it grew more comical than before.
The very sunflower seemed to laugh at the fluffy little bird,
His broad, bright faces seemed to say, "Was ever such music heard!"

I said, "Never mind, my darling; you 'll conquer it by and by,
For never baby or bird could fail, with so much courage to try!"

So I left him there, still singing, and I heard him every day
Doing bravely his little best, till winter drove him away

The dear bird and the golden flower! I mourned when chilly snow
Sent south the small musician and laid the sunflower low.
But I was sure, when in the spring the sparrows should return,
His singing would be perfect, for he strove so hard to learn.

THE FLOCK OF DOVES.

The world was like a wilderness
  Of soft and downy snow;
The trees were plumed with feathery flakes,
  And the ground was white below.

Came the little mother out to the gate
  To watch for her children three;
Her hood was red as a poppy-flower,
  And rosy and young was she.

She took the snow in her cunning hands
  As waiting she stood alone,
And lo! in a moment, beneath her touch,
  A fair white dove had grown.

A flock she wrought, and on the fence
  Set them in bright array,
With folded wings, or pinions spread,
  Ready to fly away.

And then she hid by the pine-tree tall,
For the children's tones rang sweet,
As home from school, through the drifts so light,
They sped with merry feet.

"Oh, Nannie, Nannie! See the fence
Alive with doves so white!"
"Oh, hush! don't frighten them away!"
They whisper with delight.

They crept so soft, they crept so still,
The wondrous sight to see;
The little mother pushed the gate,
And laughed out joyfully.

She clasped them close, she kissed their cheeks,
And lips so sweet and red.
"The birds are only made of snow!
You are my doves," she said.

ROBIN'S RAIN-SONG.

O Robin, pipe no more of rain!
'T is four days since we saw the sun,
And still the misty window pane
Is loud with drops that leap and run.

Four days ago the sky was clear,
But when my mother heard you call,
She said, "That 's Robin's rain-song, dear:
Oh, well he knows when rain will fall!"

Fair was the morning, and I wept
Because she would not let me stray
Into the woods for flowers, but kept
My feet from wandering away.

And I was vexed to hear you cry
So sweetly of the coming storm,
And watched with brimming eyes the sky
Grow cold and dim from clear and warm.

It seemed to me you brought it all
With that incessant, plaintive note;
And still you call the drops to fall
Upon your brown and scarlet coat.

How nice to be a bird like you,
And let the rain come pattering down,
Nor mind a bit to be wet through,
Nor fear to spoil one's only gown!

But since I cannot be a bird,
Sweet Robin, pipe no more of rain!
Your merrier music is preferred;
Forget at last that sad refrain!

And tell us of the sunshine, dear —
I 'm wild to be abroad again,
Seeking for blossoms far and near:
O Robin, pipe no more of rain!

THE WANING MOON.

The moon is tired and old;
In the morning darkness cold
She drifts up the paling sky,
With cheek flushed wearily.

A little longer, and lo!
She is lost in the sun's bright glow;
A thin shell, pearly and pale,
'Mid soft white clouds that sail.

Art faint and sad, dear moon?
Gladness shall find thee soon!
Sorry art thou to wane?
Thou shalt be young again!

And beautiful as before
Thou shalt live in the sky once more;
From the baby crescent small
Thou shalt grow to the golden ball:

And again will the children shout,
"Oh look at the moon, look out!"
For thou shalt be great and bright
As when God first made night.

THE KINGFISHER.

Could you have heard the kingfisher scream and
scold at me
When I went this morning early down to the
smiling sea!
He clamored so loud and harshly, I laughed at
him for his pains,
And off he flew with a shattered note, like the
sound of falling chains.

He perched on the rock above me, and kept up
such a din,
And looked so fine with his collar snow-white be-
neath his chin,
And his cap of velvet, black and bright, and his
jacket of lovely blue,
I looked, admired, and called to him, "Good
morning! How do you do?"

But his kingship was *so* offended! He had n't a
pleasant word,
Only the crossest jargon ever screamed by a bird.

The gray sandpiper on one leg stood still in sheer surprise,
And gazed at me, and gazed at him, with shining bead-black eyes,

And pensively sent up so sweet and delicate a note,
Ringing so high and clear from out her dainty, mottled throat,
That echo round the silent shore caught up the clear refrain,
And sent the charming music back again, and yet again.

And the brown song-sparrow on the wall made haste with such a song,
To try and drown that jarring din! but it was all too strong.
And the swallows, like a steel-blue flash, swept past and cried aloud,
"Be civil, my dear kingfisher, you 're far too grand and proud."

But it was n't of any use at all, he was too much displeased,
And only by my absence could his anger be appeased.

So I wandered off, and as I went I saw him flutter
down,
And take his place once more upon the seaweed
wet and brown.

And there he watched for his breakfast, all undis-
turbed at last,
And many a little fish he caught as it was swim-
ming past.
And I forget his harsh abuse, for, up in the tall
elm-tree,
A purple finch sat high and sang a heavenly song
for me.

PICCOLA.

Poor, sweet Piccola! Did you hear
What happened to Piccola, children dear?
'T is seldom Fortune such favor grants
As fell to this little maid of France.

'T was Christmas-time, and her parents poor
Could hardly drive the wolf from the door,
Striving with poverty's patient pain
Only to live till summer again.

No gifts for Piccola! Sad were they
When dawned the morning of Christmas-day;
Their little darling no joy might stir,
St. Nicholas nothing would bring to her!

But Piccola never doubted at all
That something beautiful must befall
Every child upon Christmas-day,
And so she slept till the dawn was gray.

And full of faith, when at last she woke,
She stole to her shoe as the morning broke ;
Such sounds of gladness filled all the air,
'T was plain St. Nicholas had been there !

In rushed Piccola sweet, half wild:
Never was seen such a joyful child.
"See what the good saint brought!" she cried,
And mother and father must peep inside.

Now such a story who ever heard ?
There was a little shivering bird!
A sparrow, that in at the window flew,
Had crept into Piccola's tiny shoe !

"How good poor Piccola must have been!"
She cried, as happy as any queen,
While the starving sparrow she fed and warmed,
And danced with rapture, she was so charmed.

Children, this story I tell to you,
Of Piccola sweet and her bird, is true.
In the far-off land of France, they say,
Still do they live to this very day.

A TRIUMPH.

Little Roger up the long slope rushing
Through the rustling corn,
Showers of dew-drops from the broad leaves brushing
In the early morn,

At his sturdy little shoulder bearing,
For a banner gay,
Stem of fir with one long shaving flaring
In the wind away!

Up he goes, the summer sunrise flushing
O'er him in his race,
Sweeter dawn of rosy childhood blushing
On his radiant face;

If he can but set his standard glorious
On the hill-top low,
Ere the sun climbs the clear sky victorious,
All the world aglow!

So he presses on with childish ardor,
Almost at the top!
Hasten, Roger! Does the way grow harder?
Wherefore do you stop?

From below the corn-stalks tall and slender
Comes a plaintive cry;
Turns he for an instant from the splendor
Of the crimson sky,

Wavers, then goes flying toward the hollow,
Calling loud and clear,
"Coming, Jenny! Oh, why did you follow?
Don't you cry, my dear!"

Small Janet sits weeping 'mid the daisies;
"Little sister sweet,
Must you follow Roger?" Then he raises
Baby on her feet.

Guides her tiny steps with kindness tender,
Cheerfully and gay,
All his courage and his strength would lend her
Up the uneven way,

Till they front the blazing east together;
But the sun has rolled

Up the sky in the still summer weather,
Flooding them with gold.

All forgotten is the boy's ambition,
Low the standard lies,
Still they stand, and gaze — a sweeter vision
Ne'er met mortal eyes.

That was splendid, Roger, that was glorious,
Thus to help the weak;
Better than to plant your flag victorious
On earth's highest peak!

RESCUED.

"Little lad, slow wandering across the sands so yellow,
Leading safe a lassie small — Oh, tell me, little fellow,
Whither go you, loitering in the summer weather,
Chattering like sweet-voiced birds on a bough together?"

"I am Robert, if you please, and this is Rose, my sister,
Youngest of us all" — he bent his curly head and kissed her,
"Every day we come and wait here till the sun is setting,
Watching for our father's ship, for mother dear is fretting.

"Long ago he sailed away out of sight and hearing,
Straight across the bay he went, into sunset steering.

Every day we look for him, and hope for his returning,
Every night my mother keeps the candle for him burning.

"Summer goes, and Winter comes, and Spring returns, but never
Father's step comes to the gate. Oh! is he gone forever?
The great grand ship that bore him off, think you some tempest wrecked her?"
Tears shone in little Rose's eyes, upturned to her protector.

Eagerly the bonny boy went on: "Oh, sir, look yonder!
In the offing see the sails that east and westward wander;
Every hour they come and go, the misty distance thronging,
While we watch and see them fade, with sorrow and with longing."

"Little Robert! little Rose!" The stranger's eyes were glistening,
At his bronzed and bearded face upgazed the children, listening;

He knelt upon the yellow sand, and clasped them
to his bosom,
Robert brave, and little Rose, as bright as any
blossom.

"Father! Father! Is it you?" The still air rings
with rapture;
All the vanished joy of years the waiting ones re-
capture!
Finds he welcome wild and sweet, the low-thatched
cottage reaching,
But the ship that into sunset steered upon the
rocks lies bleaching.

THE CONSTANT DOVE.

The white dove sat on the sunny eaves,
And "What will you do when the north wind grieves?"
She said to the busy nuthatch small,
Tapping above in the gable tall.

He probed each crack with his slender beak,
And much too busy he was to speak.
Spiders, that thought themselves safe and sound,
And moths and flies and cocoons he found.

Oh! but the white dove she was fair,
Bright she shone in the autumn air,
Turning her head from the left to the right;
Only to watch her was such delight!

"Coo!" she murmured, "poor little thing,
What will you do when the frosts shall sting?
Spiders and flies will be hidden or dead,
Snow underneath and snow overhead."

Nuthatch paused in his busy care:
"And what will *you* do, O white dove fair!"
"Oh, kind hands feed me with crumbs and grain,
And I wait with patience for spring again."

He laughed so loud that his laugh I heard,
"How can you be such a stupid bird!
What are your wings for, tell me, pray,
But to bear you from tempests and cold away?

"Merrily off to the South I fly,
In search of the summer, presently,
And warmth and beauty I'll find anew.
Why don't you follow the summer, too?"

But she cooed content on the sunny eaves,
And looked askance at the reddening leaves;
And grateful I whispered: "O white dove true,
I'll feed you and love you the winter through."

WILD GEESE.

The wind blows, the sun shines, the birds sing loud,
The blue, blue sky is flecked with fleecy dappled cloud,
Over earth's rejoicing fields the children dance and sing,
And the frogs pipe in chorus, "It is spring! It is spring!"

The grass comes, the flower laughs where lately lay the snow,
O'er the breezy hill-top hoarsely calls the crow,
By the flowing river the alder catkins swing,
And the sweet song-sparrow cries, "Spring! It is spring!"

Hark, what a clamor goes winging through the sky!
Look, children! Listen to the sound so wild and high!
Like a peal of broken bells, — kling, klang, kling, —
Far and high the wild geese cry, "Spring! It is spring!"

Bear the winter off with you, O wild geese dear!
Carry all the cold away, far away from here;
Chase the snow into the north, O strong of heart and wing,
While we share the robin's rapture, crying,
"Spring! It is spring!"

THE KITTIWAKES.

Like white feathers blown about the rocks,
  Like soft snow-flakes wavering in the air,
Wheel the Kittiwakes in scattered flocks,
  Crying, floating, fluttering everywhere.

Shapes of snow and cloud, they soar and whirl:
  Downy breasts that shine like lilies white;
Delicate vaporous tints of gray and pearl
  Laid upon their arching wings so light.

Eyes of jet and beaks and feet of gold, —
  Lovelier creatures never sailed in air;
Innocent, inquisitive, and bold,
  Knowing not the dangers that they dare.

Stooping now above a beckoning hand,
  Following gleams of waving kerchiefs white,
What should they of evil understand,
  Though the gun awaits them full in sight?

Though their blood the quiet wave makes red,
Though their broken plumes float far and wide,
Still they linger, hovering overhead,
Still the gun deals death on every side.

Oh, begone, sweet birds, or higher soar!
See you not your comrades low are laid?
But they only flit and call the more, —
Ignorant, unconscious, undismayed.

Nay, then, boatman, spare them! Must they bear
Pangs like these for human vanity?
That their lovely plumage we may wear
Must these fair, pathetic creatures die?

Let the tawny squaws themselves admire,
Decked with feathers — we can wiser be.
Ah, beseech you, boatman, do not fire!
Stain no more with blood the tranquil sea.

TRAGEDY.

"You queer little wonderful owlet! you atom so fluffy and small!
Half a handful of feathers and two great eyes — how came you alive at all?
And why do you sit here blinking as blind as a bat in the light,
With your pale eyes bigger than saucers? Now who ever saw such a sight!

"And what ails chickadee, tell me! what makes him flutter and scream
Round and over you where you sit like a tiny ghost in a dream?
I thought him a sensible fellow, quite steady and calm and wise,
But only see how he hops and flits, and hear how wildly he cries!

"What is the matter, you owlet? You will not be frightened away! —
Do you mean on that twig of a lilac-bush the whole night long to stay?

Are you bewitching my chickadee-dee? I really
believe that you are!
I wish you'd go off, you strange brown bird —
oh, ever and ever so far!

"I fear you are weaving and winding some kind
of a dreadful charm;
If I leave poor chickadee-dee with you, I'm sure
he will come to harm.
But what can I do? We can't stay here forever
together, we three —
One anxious child, and an owlet weird, and a
frightened chickadee-dee!"

I could not frighten the owl away, and chickadee
would not come,
So I just ran off with a heavy heart, and told my
mother at home;
But when my brothers and sisters went the curious
sight to see,
The owl was gone, and there lay on the ground
two feathers of chickadee-dee!

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